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Agenda Item 7

FINANCING OF EXPERTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION WHEN PARTICIPATING IN UNCTAD MEETINGS

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998, agreed to the use of the amount of US$ 1,088,000 for the expenses of experts, *inter alia*, attending, in their personal capacity, expert meetings convened by the Trade and Development Board. Not all the funds were utilized during the biennium 1998-1999. Accordingly, the Assembly, in section XIV of resolution 54/251 of 23 December 1999, agreed that, "on an exceptional basis..., the unspent balance [be] retained until all the activities and programmes outlined in the report of the Secretary-General of 13 May 1998 and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998 are completed".

2. A report on the financing and participation of developing country experts in the seven expert meetings held in 1999 was provided to the twenty-second executive session of the Board (TD/B/EX(22)/2). A report was submitted to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly on the implementation by UNCTAD of all activities financed from the unspent balance (A/54/501), on which ACABQ reported in document A/54/7/Add.3.

3. At the time of reporting, two expert meetings have so far been held in 2000, as follows:

- Expert Meeting on Mergers and Acquisitions: Policies aimed at maximizing the positive and minimizing the possible negative impact of international investment, 19-21 June 2000;

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- Expert Meeting on Impact of the Reform Process in Agriculture on LDCs and Net Food Importing Developing Countries and Ways to Address their Concerns in Multilateral Trade Negotiations, 24-26 July 2000.

4. A total of 29 experts from developing countries were able to participate in the two meetings, 13 in the first and 16 in the second. Of this number, 10 were from least developed countries. Eleven experts came from Africa, eight from Asia and the Pacific, and 10 from Latin America. Twenty-two experts were men and seven were women.

5. In the report to the twenty-second session of the Trade and Development Board (see para. 2 above), the secretariat expressed the view that the quality and relevance of both the discussions at, and the outcome of, expert meetings convened in 1999 had been enhanced as a result of the presence of the additional experts from developing countries financed through the afore-mentioned arrangements. Members of the Board, in their discussion on the issue, shared that assessment. The experience of the secretariat on the two meetings held so far in the year 2000 confirms the continuing validity of this conclusion.

6. The unspent balance carried over in to 2000 for the financing of participation of experts amounted to US$ 587,712. The total cost of the participation of the experts in the two meetings held in 2000 is estimated at US$ 102,421.

7. Assuming that, on average, 16 experts attend each of the seven expert meetings remaining in 2000, the secretariat estimates that there would remain a balance at end-2000 of about US$ 93,000 against the original provision established by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/3.